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ABSTRACT

This update is intended to provide a summary of current information for implementing the Nebraska School-Based Teacher-Led Assessment and Reporting System (STARS). It is part of a series of materials provided by the Nebraska Department of Education beginning with the STARS guide of 1999. The summary includes background information, including the purpose of STARS, Nebraska's statutory requirements related to educational accountability, and information regarding the Nebraska standards. The second section focuses on planning for implementation in school year 2000-2001, including: (1) development of the local assessment plan; (2) conducting local assessment of standards; (3) participating in statewide writing assessment; and (4) submitting assessment models. The third section contains future schedules, and the fourth contains definitions of terms used in the STARS initiatives. (SLD)

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STARS

School-based
Teacher-led
Assessment and
Reporting
System

Update # 2
A STARS SUMMARY
August 2000

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PURPOSE OF THIS STARS UPDATE

This Update is intended to provide a summary of current information for implementing the Nebraska School-based Teacher-led Assessment and Reporting System (STARS). It is part of a series of materials provided by the Nebraska Department of Education including the STARS Guide of October 1999, STARS Toolkit in December 1999, and STARS Update #1 in May 2000.

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For further information – See also:

A. STARS Guide (October 1999)
B. STARS Toolkit (December 1999)
C. STARS UPDATE #1 (May 2000)

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Purpose of STARS

The Nebraska plan for implementation of standards, assessment, and reporting was developed through the leadership of the State Board of Education in cooperation with Nebraska educators, board members, and patrons. It is supported by legislation passed in 2000. The purposes are:

- To improve learning for all Nebraska students
- To provide information to assist classroom teachers with instruction
- To increase the quality of local assessment
- To provide information for local and state policy leaders

B. Statutory Requirements

Nebraska statute 79-760, originally passed in 1998 to require statewide assessment was amended by legislative bill 812 in the 2000 session of the Nebraska legislature.

The new law requires that each public school district:

- Adopt measurable quality academic content standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies, and history that are the same as, equal to, or exceeding in rigor, the state standards. The local standards are to be completed by July 1, 2003.
- Begin assessment and reporting in 2000-01 to include:
    - A local assessment of reading including speaking and listening
    - Participation in a statewide writing assessment
    - Submission of local assessment models to NDE to be reviewed and rated by independent assessment experts, at the conclusion of the 2000-01 school year.

- Report results of local assessments on a building basis to the Nebraska Department of Education.

  Statute 79-760 as amended in 1999 requires that the State Department of Education publish a State Report Card beginning in fall 2000. The report card is to include a statewide aggregate of at least the following: student achievement, graduation rate, student attendance, teacher attendance, teacher qualifications, graduate follow-up, and school funding.

  Information for the Report Card was collected during the 1999-00 school year.

II. PLANNING FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF STARS IN 2000

A. Develop A Local Assessment Plan – Due September 30, 2000

Local planning is crucial to effective local implementation of standards, assessment and reporting. Therefore, Nebraska schools have been asked, as a part of the STARS plan, to develop a local assessment plan to be submitted to NDE for review. The plan should:

- Guide all school staff in implementing the district's assessment and reporting process.
- Be based on the outline in the STARS Guide of October 1999.
- Indicate how the school plans to fulfill the "Quality Indicators" for assessment (See STARS Update of May 2000).
- Be submitted either on paper or electronically.
- Be submitted to NDE by September 30, 2000.

The plan will be reviewed and any suggestions returned to the school.

B. Conduct Local Assessment of Standards

- In 2000-01 all public schools should assess student progress toward the reading, speaking, listening standards plus writing standards 4.2.5 and 8.2.5 (which are not covered by the statewide writing assessment).
- The assessment of standards may include local criterion-referenced assessment plus norm-referenced assessments (as described in STARS Guide October, 1999).
- The assessments may be conducted anytime during the 2000-01 school year.

C. Participate in Statewide Writing Assessment

Plans for the statewide writing assessment are under development. They include the following:

- Statewide writing assessment will begin in the spring 2000-01.
- The 2000-01 year will be considered a pilot year. This means that local district writing scores will not be included in the fall 2001 State of the Schools Report, but schools should include writing achievement in reports to the local district.
- The assessment will include all students in grades 4, 8, 11 in all public schools. It is anticipated that the writing will take place in February. Guides with example writing prompts (topics) and the scoring rubrics will be mailed to schools in fall 2000.
- Each paper will be scored and scores returned to the local districts, or districts may choose to score locally if staff members are trained in trait based scoring.
- A random sample of papers from Nebraska schools will be sent out-of-state to be scored to provide an aggregate Nebraska score for 2000-01.

D. Submit Model Assessments

The new law (79-760) requires that schools submit model assessments at the conclusion of the school year for the scheduled subject areas. The model should show how the district determined student progress toward the standards. It is anticipated that assessment models would include:

- Quality indicators – indicating how the district actually did meet the quality indicators proposed in the local assessment plan.
- Examples of assessments, rubrics or other appropriate documentation.

Additional information will be provided to guide schools. Models should be submitted to NDE in June 2001.

- All local assessment models will be reviewed and rated with four models to be selected as a state model.
- Schools may adopt one of the four or adapt their own local models to be as highly rated.

III. FUTURE ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING SCHEDULES

2001 – Reading, speaking listening and statewide writing Grades 4, 8, 11
2002 - Mathematics Grades 4, 8, 11 and statewide writing – Grade 4
2003 – Science Grades 4, 8, 11 and statewide writing – Grade 8
2004 – Social Studies Grades 4, 8, 11 and statewide writing – Grade 11

IV. Definition Of Terms

State Report Card – An aggregate of student and school information to be initially published in fall 2000

State of Schools Report – A report providing student and school information for each Nebraska school. The report will also include the state wide aggregate. To be initially published in fall 2001.

Quality Indicators – The six indicators of quality assessment (reflects the standards, opportunity to learn, free from bias, appropriate level, consistency in scoring, appropriate mastery level). See STARS Update of May 2000

Assessment Models - A set of information and example assessment materials to be submitted to NDE in June 2001. Information will be provided.